Introduction

> *The research and study of board games could be seen as a "dead science" for many, especially now that a well-developed, digitally interactive media has found "videogames" to be a very prolific market. There has not been extensive research in the area of board games. Researchers have sporadically appeared and disappeared, leaving a legacy that few have systematically followed.*—Ortega-Grimaldo, 2008, p. 34

For many people, board games are an anachronism. The idea of gathering around a table to move pieces on a board conjures up visions of a bygone era, one in which a sense of community flourished, families played together and porch doors were always open. Although these same people will occasionally play board games, typically with their children or at family gatherings, for the most part these games are consigned to the same closet as typewriters and rotary dial telephones, all victims of the inevitable redundancy that accompanies technological progress. For some people, however, board games are far from being redundant. To them they are a hobby, a passion, even an obsession. It is these people, the games they play, and their experience of that play that is the subject of this book. Specifically, this book is a study of hobbyist gamers who play a form of board game commonly referred to as eurogames.

For the purposes of this book I use the term board game to refer to any game that requires a tabletop for play. However, many of the games described herein are not played on a board as such. In fact, a significant number are card games. Nevertheless, I have used the term board games to avoid the clumsiness of repeated reference to "board and table games." Where not indicated in the text, the specific form of a game is noted in the reference list that is found at the end of the book. The term "hobby games" is explained in detail in the second chapter of this book. Briefly, it refers to a number of specific game forms that have emerged over the last forty years and which appeal to a particular audience. Examples are wargames, role-playing games, collectible card games and the topic of this book—eurogames.

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